

IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN

AUTUMN-WINTER 1986

No.10

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IRISH STUDIES IN BRITAIN

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Irish Studies in Britain promotes and publicises the development of all aspects of Irish Studies in this country. It is published regularly (usually twice a year – Spring and Autumn) and is available from selected bookshops or in case of difficulty from the address below. Price 75p (95p including postage); 85p Republic of Ireland (including postage £1.15).

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EDITORIAL

The overriding concern of all of us striving to introduce Irish Studies into the British educational curriculum, at whatever level, is the constant battle to overcome ignorance, apathy, antipathy and suspicion from those who determine what is taught in the British education system at both local and national level.

Put bluntly, as it was in the ILEA's house magazine 'Contact' recently, this means that we have continually to cope with the sort of attitude which defines Irish Studies as "political indoctrination by crypto-terrorists". How many of us can deny that we have all come across this attitude, spoken or more usually unspoken, from time to time.

How to cope with this? Should we be pragmatically moving away from too close an association with groups and organisations who firmly believe that the educational and the political are one struggle? After all, isn't it true that our work is difficult enough without having, effectively, one hand held behind our back being told repeatedly (and in some cases, justifiably) that we are not interested in education but just interested in promoting a form of nationalism which uses education as a stick to beat Britain about the head with? In an authority such as the ILEA even allowing for the reasons why Irish Studies has not received any official recognition – refusal to recognise the Irish as an ethnic minority; the suspicion (often quite correct) of other ethnic minorities towards the Irish community's sudden sense of ethnic awareness (for what reasons; to what ends etc?) and outright political opposition – who can deny that perhaps the most important reason, although never stressed is the fact that the British local state (or national, come to that) is unhappy, uncomfortable or downright hostile to negotiating on education progress with groups and organisations whose aims are overtly political and ideological.

What are we – all those promoting Irish Studies going to do about this state of affairs. Either refuse to compromise by dividing the ideological from the educational in which case we will get absolutely nowhere? Try to enlist to our cause the support of those who wish to see Irish Studies promoted – parents, members of the Irish community, others educationalists – but who shy away when they discover that the educational issue is only masking a political one?

The blunt fact is that Irish themes will only be introduced into British education when there is a groundswell of support for such from amongst those who have no ulterior political axe to grind – from Irish parents and teachers; from other educationalists; from other members of the community, British and Irish, black and white alike. To pretend otherwise is to perpetually relegate Irish Studies to the margins of the British education system.

PRICE INCREASE

With effect from this issue we have had to increase the price of **Irish Studies in Britain** to 75p. This is because of rising costs in producing the magazine. The price of a year's subscription also goes up to £1.90 because of a combination of increased printing costs and the rise in postal rates in October.

BACK ISSUES

There are limited numbers of issues 5, 6, 7 and 9 only available for 70p each or £2.50 (sterling) for all four. This price includes postage. Send orders to the publishers, Addison Press, at 83 Frithville Gardens, London W.12

★★★★★★

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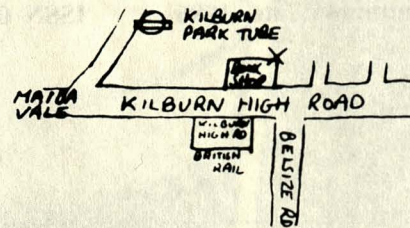
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LETTERS

'Some Stereotypes Challenged'
Challenged!

Dear Editors

I would like to take issue with Bernard Canavan over his article in *Irish Studies in Britain* no. 9 (Spring/Summer 1986). Before replying to this may I first draw attention to another feature of the article – namely an important factual mistake. Mr Canavan informs his readers that 37 per cent of the population of Ireland is 'non-Catholic'. This figure is simply incorrect. The combined populations of the two parts of Ireland is approximately five million, of whom 3.5 million live in the 26 counties and 1.5 million in the six counties. There are approximately 900,000 non-Catholic, largely protestant, people in the six counties and roughly 150,000 of these latter in the twenty six counties. This largely protestant, non-Catholic, population thus totals a little over one million in the entire island: a little over twenty per cent of the total population. In short Mr Canavan almost doubles the non-Catholic proportion of the Irish population.

May I now turn to the basic arguments of Mr Canavan's article. He rightly points out that there exists a wrong assumption linking language and race. Given this it is a pity that he then precedes to reiterate what is itself a perverted racial interpretation of history: namely that the Irish are not really Celts. As a buttress to this he quotes E.E. Evans who has stated that the Irish carry more genes deriving from English settlers than they do from the Celts. Even if this were true it is largely irrelevant. It is however of interest to note that English scholars now hold the view that the 'Anglo-Saxons' (the original English – and I use the term in its correct linguistico-cultural sense) were only a minority who imposed their language and rule on a largely Celtic speaking British population.

Thus the English who settled in Ireland in a later time were themselves largely descended, genetically, from stocks who had been Celtic speaking. Then we come to realise that these stocks were themselves Celticised descendents of older inhabitants.

The above goes towards drawing attention to a frequently overlooked fact – namely that the basic racial stocks (and I use the term in its correct scientific sense) of Europe have remained largely static since at least the Mesolithic period. By various processes – internal cultural evolution, culture-creep, colonisation, folk-movement and cultural invasion the latter process being the one largely responsible for the retreat of our own language) – these basic stocks have had their outward linguistic and cultural identities changed through historic and prehistoric time.

If the argument that the Gaels were only a minority is correct then so what: are not almost all the historic nations of Europe the creations of some particular group or other similarly imposing their language and culture on older stocks already in occupation of particular geographical zones? Thus the Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Magyars and Bulgars – to name but a few examples – gave their identities to populations largely descended from older stocks. In the west such nations as the French, Portuguese and Galicians are genetically descended from very ancient stocks – even though nations of these names are little more than a thousand years old.

Dissecting nations to establish the proportions of the various elements, which has become so popular a pastime where the Irish are concerned, is racist. Even if the original Gaels were only a minority (and I could present a strong

case demonstrating that they were not) the fact remains that the blood of these Gaels runs in the veins of almost every latter day inhabitant of Ireland – however diluted, just as diluted Serbs, Croat or Slovene blood flows in the veins of the modern members of those nations. Nationhood, after all, is a matter of tradition, of culture or way of life, handed down through language. Where a language dies a culture dies – and where both these things cease a nation also dies.

The Gauls were a nation – in the sense of a people united by language, laws, institutions and patterns of thought and behaviour. Something of their blood and culture exists within the modern French nationality – but the notion that the French are Gauls is a romantic one: they are not the historic Gaulish nation. If the Irish language were to die then no doubt the inhabitants of Ireland could claim that Gaelic blood flowed in their veins, much as the French claim that Gaulish blood does is theirs. In a similar way no doubt Gaelic elements would exist within the nation which occupied Ireland – again much as Gaulish elements exist within the French national culture. The claims of that people occupying Ireland to be the historic Irish nation would be as romantic and meaningless as the claims of the French to be the historic Gaulish nation.

As a near final point may I return to those remarks of E.E. Evans. Terence Wise calculates that no more than 8,000 Normans settled in England following the conquest. This justifies us in deducing that no more than 5,000, for the sake of discussion, settled in Ireland during the 12th century. Norman is here used as a term of convenience since the invaders included Welsh, Flemings and English as well as Normans. The settlers, however, were outnumbered by a hundred to one by the 'natives', of whom there were an estimated half million. Stated another way one per cent of the genetic pool of the modern Irish can be traced to these invaders (allowing for the postulated figure of 5,000 being correct). Similar crude extrapolations could be made for the contributions of later colonist groups. Outside of Ulster the contributions of these later groups to the overall genetic pool would be found to be similarly small.

These extrapolations may well seem bold – and so they are. How much bolder however are those extrapolations made by scholars with reference to prehistoric populations?

As Celtic scholars cannot themselves agree as to the exact circumstances of the introduction of Celtic to Ireland, or of the date, then it is a bold scholar indeed who would confidently calculate their contribution to the present genetic pool.

Even historic nation in Europe has absorbed various human elements. This is an ongoing process. It is also a healthy one, bringing hybrid vigour to the nations. The Irish nation is no exception but for the fact that since the 17th century the elements have not been absorbed by a healthy organism but have been imposed. As such these elements have not brought hybrid vigour but have been parasitic, strangulating the organic evolution of the historic Irish nation, the Gaelic nation.

Kevin Collins
Hull

NEWS

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

The idea of forming a British Association for Irish Studies (BAIS) originated with a suggestion, floated informally amongst participants at a conference on literature, by Dr Mary FitzGerald in July, 1984. She suggested that Irish Studies (that is: the study of Ireland, its history, cultures and peoples) had been developing piecemeal in the British educational system for a number of years and that the time had come to establish a forum, where people working in Irish Studies could meet and exchange materials and views, and which could be the vehicle to press for the expansion of funding support for Irish Studies, not only in higher education, but also in adult and continuing education and in the schools' sector.

Following an informal meeting of interested persons, it was agreed to test the support for the concept of Irish Studies by attempting to hold a conference on the subject. To this end, it was agreed to approach the members of an Anglo-Irish intergovernmental organisation, **Anglo-Irish Encounter** at one of their regular meetings, to ask for financial support for the venture. Their support enabled the Conference, which was held in September 1985 at St Peter's College Oxford, to take place.

It is generally agreed that the St Peter's Conference was highly successful in raising the profile of Irish Studies in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It was well attended by academics present by invitation of **Anglo-Irish Encounter** and also by government spokespersons of both Ireland and the United Kingdom, the latter assuring the former that they were in no doubt that Irish Studies was an area of serious and valued educational endeavour, and one that might look to both States, and to agencies within and beyond them, for financial support to develop Irish Studies further. These assurances were welcomed, particularly since the preliminary returns of the **Survey of Irish Studies**, issued at the Conference, had shown considerably more activity in Irish Studies than had hitherto been suspected.

Following the St Peter's Conference the new Interim Committee set about the slow task of providing all the various elements which would be needed for a functional British Association for Irish Studies. These have been assembled at four meetings since September 1985. The Interim Committee has drawn up a Draft Constitution, made outline arrangements for the new Association's first full Conference in its own right for April 1987, mounted a drive for subscriptions, conducted correspondence with similarly interested bodies (e.g. the American Committee for Irish Studies) and has begun to extend the existing scope of the **Survey** to cover Further and Continuing Education and the Schools' sector.

The Interim Committee gave way to the Executive Committee elected at the first AGM of BAIS held in London in early July. In addition to the Executive Committee three advisory sub-committees of the Association have been set up to promote Irish Studies at (i) primary and secondary (ii) further, adult and continuing and (iii) university and polytechnic levels.

In the meantime membership of BAIS is increasing rapidly (it costs £12 per year; £7.50 if unwaged); there are plans to produce a newsletter and further contact is being made with academics and educationalists promoting Irish Studies at all levels in Britain.

If you would like to find out more contact Dr David Cairns, Secretary, BAIS, c/o Department of Humanities, North Staffordshire Polytechnic, Beaconside, Stafford ST18 0AD. Tel. 0785 52331 x 288 and 318.

LEICESTER IRISH STUDIES WORKSHOP

The Irish Studies Workshop at Soar Valley College, Leicester resumes for a fourth year on Wednesday 17 September and continues for 12 weeks until 10 December (with a break on 22 October), 7.30–9.30 p.m.

The course, which has built up a fine reputation in the East Midlands this year examines topics as diverse as the United Irishmen and the 1798 Rising; Ulster Emigration to the USA; the Fenians in America; the Celtic Revival and Irish Art; Irish-Americans; the work of Sheridan Le Fanu and Bram Stoker in 19th century Gothic Literature; Megalithic Archaeology in Ireland; the 1935 anti-Catholic riots in Edinburgh and the Irish in Leicester 1798–1986. The course is interspersed with film evenings and culminates in a traditional Christmas ceili on Wednesday, 17 December.

The fee for the course is only £10 (£5 unwaged and retired students). For further information contact Nessian Danaher at Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester LE 7GY. Tel 0533 669625.

★★★★

AFTER 'LÁ' – 'NUACHT FEIRSTE'

Our more eagle-eyed Irish-speaking readers will have noticed the out-of-date reference to 'Lá', the Belfast Irish language daily in Seoirse Ó Broin's article in 'ISIB' no. 9. Seoirse's article was written before the disastrous fire which has prevented 'Lá' from appearing for over six months.

However, the Sinn Féin Cultural Department in Belfast has advised us that pending the return of 'Lá', readers may be interested in subscribing to 'Nuacht Feirste', a weekly all-Irish newspaper produced by Sinn Féin. A six month subscription costing £6.00 is available from Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Sinn Féin Cultural Department, 147 Bóthar Bhaile Andarsan, Béal Feirste 11.

★★★★

HISTORY WORKSHOP

The theme of this year's History Workshop is 'Uses of History' and one of the seminars is 'The Irish in England/The British State in Ireland'. The convenor is Sean Hutton, 16 Cambridge Street, Bridlington YO16 4JZ. The conference takes place from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 November at Leeds Polytechnic. Registration fees are £7.00 waged; £2.50 low waged, part-time workers and students and £1.00 unwaged, pensioners and school students. Ring Bob Franklin on 0532 431751 x 7094 for further details.

★★★★

IRISH IN ISLINGTON

The Irish in Islington Project is an ex-GLC funded organisation made up of local Irish people in North London. It was established in 1983 to campaign for a fair share of resources for the Irish community and to campaign against anti-Irish racism. The Project has 4 full-time workers funded by the London Borough of Islington who organise Irish language classes, run the Irish in Islington Pensioners' Lunch Club; liaise with Islington Libraries on the provision of Irish books and other cultural activities and provide information and advice for local Irish people.

The Project has started producing its own newsletter, 'Seal' which will be available every 6 to 8 weeks and can be obtained from Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19 3RU. Tel. 01 281 3225.

★★★★

ICCEL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Following the recent Dartford Conference on provision for Irish students within the Inner London Education Authority, the Brent-based Irish Commission for Culture and Education (ICCEL) is planning to hold, in association with Kilburn Polytechnic, a London-wide Irish Studies education conference in October. Entitled 'An Irish Dimension in the Education Process', the object of the conference will be to promote the Irish dimension at all levels in parallel with developments for and by other ethnic minorities and will consider the practical implications of introducing Irish perspectives into the curriculum. The conference will particularly aim at guidelines and directives at all levels of education and will stress the implications of such for statutory authorities as well as clearly stipulating requirements.

For further information on date, venue and programme contact ICCEL at 76-82 Salisbury Road, London NW6 4NU, Tel 01 624 3158.

★★★★

KILBURN POLYTECHNIC IRISH STUDIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Kilburn Polytechnic in the London Borough of Brent recently ran, in conjunction with the Irish Commission for Culture and Education, a highly-successful pilot course in Irish Studies in the summer term just finished. As a result a year long evening course will start in October covering language, literature, folklore and exploring themes and issues in history, politics, economics, sociology and art.

Planners of Irish Studies course elsewhere in the country may be interested in the questionnaire devised and the results obtained.

Three points in particular should be mentioned - (1) The high percentage of people who wanted to do an Irish Studies course leading to a qualification. (2) The great interest shown in the history of the Irish in Britain in the 20th century and in Irish Studies pertaining to the 20th century generally. (3) The highest number of first choices went to a sociological survey of present-day Ireland.

Copies of the survey and its findings can be obtained from Geraldine Lander, Department of General Education and Languages, Kilburn Polytechnic, Priory Park Road, London NW6 1YB. Please include a large stamped addressed envelope. Geraldine would be interested to hear from anyone who uses the questionnaire but stresses that it was, in this case, a small sample, pertaining to evening classes so no generalisations can be made.

★★★★

IRISH IN BRITAIN HISTORY GROUP

The London-based Irish in Britain History Group continues their series of monthly lectures this autumn starting on Thursday September 4 with a talk by Fr Claude Malone on the history and work of the Camden Irish Centre since it was first established in 1955. This is followed in October with a talk by Charles McCarthy on the contribution to British education of the De La Salle Brothers from 1855 to 1975. November's talk is by author and teacher Moy McCrory on 'Growing Up Irish in Liverpool'.

All lectures take place the first Thursday of each month at the Irish Centre, Murray St, London NW1. Admission is free and the talks commence at 7.30 p.m.

★★★★

QUAKER BOOK

The Friendly Press, the publishing company of Ireland's Quakers have sent us their list of recent publications, foremost of which is **Ireland and Chernobyl** available for £1.60 sterling from the Friendly Press, 61 Newtown Road, Waterford, Ireland. Write to them also for a list of their other publications.

★★★★

DEMYSTIFYING PUBLISHING

Another small Irish publisher, the Women's Community Press, have asked us to mention that their latest book **Making Your Mark** is now available based on the experiences the Women's Community Press has had running publishing workshops with community and writing groups in Dublin and its environs. **Making Your Mark** aims to demystify the whole idea of publishing and to help any person or group thinking of bringing out a pamphlet, book, newsletter etc for themselves. It's available for £1.95 from Women's Community Press, 44 East Essex Street, Dublin 2.

★★★★

TOM PUBLICATIONS

From feminism to loyalism, from the RUC to the IRA, there are now a wealth of publications available on the subject of Ireland (including **Irish Studies in Britain!**). Many of them are available by mail order from the Troops Out Movement. A new illustrated publications list, giving prices and brief descriptions, is now available (send s.a.e.) from TOM, PO Box 353, London NW5 4NH.

★★★★

ISLINGTON IRISH BOOKLIST

The London Borough of Islington Library Service has produced an Irish booklist of books, cassettes, and maps of Irish interest held in Islington's libraries. A large stamped addressed envelope sent to Archway Library, Hamlyn House, Highgate Hill, London N19 should procure you a copy.

★★★★

IRISH THEMES IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Alan Parkinson, an ILEA English teacher (and regular contributor to this magazine) and David Whiteley of the ILEA's Multi-Ethnic Education Inspectorate have produced a video and booklet on their experiences of introducing Irish themes into the primary classroom at Henry Fawcett Junior Mixed School in Lambeth. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of either, contact Alan at 49 Worthington Road, Surbiton, Surrey, Tel. 01 399 8770.

★★★★

MANCHESTER IRISH EDUCATION GROUP

A new initiative in Manchester is the recently formed Irish Education Group, a voluntary organisation with close contacts inside Manchester Education Department. It was set up to assess the needs and wishes of the local Irish community with regard to education in Manchester and has already sent out a questionnaire to Irish parents and plans to submit the answers to Manchester Education Committee. If you are interested in getting involved in the Group contact the Chairman, Tom McAndrew on 061 445 6243 or the Secretary, Les Hankin on 061 491 2218.

★★★★

LEICESTER THIRD ANNUAL IRISH STUDIES CONFERENCE

— full report

Nessan Danaher

The 1986 Conference took as its theme: 'the Irish Community in Britain — a Future for its Cultures?' The two guest speakers were Prof. James O'Connell of the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford and Prof. David Jenkins of the Department of Arts Education at the University of Warwick.

Enrolment figures were in the region of 200; this is encouraging given that the Conference has now been running for 3 years and active interest appears to be ongoing. Again, representation in terms of both geographical spread and levels of educational activity was widespread. Particularly welcome were the many Irish community associations who decided to send their representatives; in fact, it would be true to say that for once the recent factionalism within the community in Britain was bridged on the day in the sense that no major community body was absent. This augurs well for future co-operation and development.

The printed programme for the Conference has become a useful resource in itself in that it contains details of a variety of recent developments which participants have indicated they find to be of value. Topics covered included the suggested Irish Studies Degree Course at Keele (now unfortunately not to be), the N. Irish Schools Cultural Studies Project, the terms of reference of the London-based Irish Commission for Culture and Education and the aims and objectives of both the Irish in Britain History Centre and the new sociological research body called Action Group for Irish Youth. (For those outside London, the information on the last 3 of these organisations will be reprinted in the formal Report of the '86 Conference, due by the end of the year.)

Perhaps the most notable contribution yet made at these Conferences came from our first guest speaker Prof. James O'Connell, who delivered a paper entitled **Care and Dear Concern: the Cultural Linkages of Britain and Ireland**. This important lecture, first delivered at an Anglo-Irish Encounter Conference in Dublin in 1984, has much of significance to say on the future of the Irish community in Britain. It has now reached, hopefully, a much wider audience.

As well as physical proximity and a complicated historical relationship said Prof. O'Connell, Britain and Ireland shape common experiences in terms of Christianity, language and democratic government. There are factors of division also, exemplified in the Northern Irish question, for example. The whole issue of cultural pluralism both within and between the two islands was explored. Schools, in subjects like literature and history, can develop understanding and linkages, and they can promote school visits and teacher exchanges between Britain and Ireland. Youth groups also can, through sport and music, especially traditional music, cross national barriers among young people. There is a role for tradition and a place for the meetings of traditions. Isolated traditions stagnate said Prof. O'Connell, and frozen traditions warp. The future lies with peoples who can co-operate creatively. The ensuing debate at the Conference was heated (especially the contributions from some of the Irish language speakers) but much of Prof. O'Connell's contribution seemed to find favour with the great majority of participants. A brief report such as this cannot, of course, do justice to the contributors; Prof. O'Connell's paper will be reprinted in full in our forthcoming Report. A recent issue of this Journal spoke of Irish Studies being at a crossroads; if this is so, then James O'Connell has charted the path to a positive future.

Less well received by some of the more partisan participants was the contribution from the second guest speaker, Prof. David Jenkins, who spoke on the **N. Ireland Schools Cultural Studies Project: A Re-assessment of its Problems and Possibilities**. The S.C.S. Project was set up in the 1970s with the aim of facilitating a conscious renewal or development of culture with the school as a key institution with a role to play in that process. The major aims of the Project involved an attempt to promote cultural develop-

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9 Irish Studies in Britain

ment, personal awareness, and mutual understanding and effective citizenship. Prof. Jenkins focused on the secondary curriculum, the combating of sectarianism and the reconstruction of an awareness of social issues and problems.

As Prof. Jenkins indicated, the changes in personnel involved in leading the Project in its early days led to shifts in ideological perspective and indeed teaching perspectives. The curriculum development debates of the '60s and early 70s were reflected in the Project at different times; the effective consolidation work was carried out by Dr Alan Robinson after his appointment to lead the venture. The Project materials are of relevance to all interested in Irish Studies in the classroom (next year, the '87 Conference hopes to focus of the SCS Project more closely, inviting a guest speaker from the North and analysing the project materials). For those of us who knew little of the Project; Prof. Jenkins overview was both timely and stimulating.

Equally vibrant were the debates that took place within the various discussion groups. The organisers have had a number of letters by way of feedback and it would appear that many participants regard the workshops as indispensable (even if not in agreement with conclusions reached). We wish to thank the various contributors: viz. Brendan Mulkere who attracted many community representatives to his talk on the work of ICCEL; Ivan Gibbons, who charted paths of development for Irish Studies in adult education; Mary Hickman analysed the Irish experience of racism and the work of the Irish in Britain History Group; Eamonn Hughes examined Irish studies at degree level; Bernard Canavan delivered an alternative viewpoint on the Irish in Britain: why are we here?; Maggie Garven offered the experience of Irish Studies through classroom and practical archaeology; Barry Dufour gave an introductory overview of the N. Irish schools Cultural Studies Project. All the workshop seminars were well attended and we thank both contributors and participants. Particularly well received was Bernard Canavan's controversial contribution; due to demand this workshop will be repeated at next year's conference.

We would like to thank all who helped to make the '86 Conference a success and hope to see many of you next year – as well as the usual intake of new faces. The '86 Report is available from Soar Valley College or the LEA Multicultural Centre (address given below). Please send four 13p. stamps to cover p & p and reprographic costs). The '86 Conference Report should be ready by December and will be distributed free of charge at the 4th Conference due in February 1987. Also, we wish to thank Leicester City Council's Recreation and Arts Department for a generous grant towards the running of the Conference and Leicestershire LEA's Multicultural Education Centre for helping with the presentation and production cost of the '85 Report.

Reports for '84 and '85 available from:

Nessan J. Danaher
Irish Studies Workshop
Soar Valley College
Gleneagles Avenue
Leicester, LE4 7GY
(Tel: 0533-669625)

1985 Reports only from:

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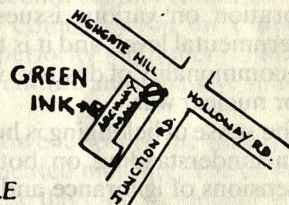
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CARE AND DEAR CONCERN*: the cultural linkages of Britain and Ireland

Professor James O'Connell

*G.M. Hopkins, *Ribblesdale*

A: Introduction

1. *Aims:* In this paper I want to argue that the peoples of these islands possess much in common as well as cherish individual distinctiveness. From the way in which they have historically come together and now live in relation to one another they own a sense of belonging. Both the convergence of the peoples and their degree of belonging face obstacles from the encounters of history as well as from the uneasiness that arises out of differences and inequalities among the partners. All the peoples, moreover, live in the regional context of Western Europe as well as in a global context whose dimensions have been reduced by technology. These contexts are, by and large, supportive of the convergence of the peoples. So I shall examine belonging, encounter, and context; and I shall try to do so in taking history, common and shared possessions, and social distinctiveness into account.

2. *Belonging and obstacles:* If a sense of belonging is recognised as characterising the two islands, it is because it is possible to point to factors that structure it: it has roots in a common language and geographical contiguity; it is strengthened by the historical as well as contemporary movement of persons between the islands; it is facilitated by relatively frequent intermarriage; it is fostered by collaboration on various issues at governmental and non-governmental level; and it is toughened, finally, by a manifest commonality of destiny, whether in economic prosperity or nuclear war.

The sense of belonging is however weakened by a degree of misunderstanding on both sides and complicated by dimensions of ignorance and prejudice, particularly in the larger island. Moreover, the history of relationships is peculiarly unhappy for the smaller island. These negative factors are in these days worsened by the immediate problems of the tensions and violence in Northern Ireland and by the longer term imbalance of a smaller culture's problem of survival alongside a larger culture. Yet the contention of this paper is that it is possible to build constructively on the positive factors and that it is possible to contain the negative ones.

B: Acknowledgement of problems

In this section I want to take an initial look at the three problems that I have already mentioned that oppose and/or complicate relations between the peoples: an unhappy history, the Northern Irish civil strife and the imbalance of the groups. I will take each problem in turn.

1. *Unhappy history:* Once the medieval movement to consolidate and expand states got under way it was only a matter of time before the English kingdom sought on the one hand to prevent a hostile state developing on its flank and on the other to expand into Ireland in an impulse of conquest as it would into Wales and Scotland. Once the smaller island had been conquered the issue of security would then be argued indefinitely in order to retain the conquest. In measure the conquest succeeded and no Irish state managed to emerge after the Norman invasion in the twelfth century.

The conquest remained nonetheless incomplete and flawed. Initially the dispersed polities of Ireland resisted easy absorption – this was the other side of the absence of a single state – and made Norman/English control expensive

and partial down to the seventeenth century. Moreover, the Gaelic language and culture absorbed the Norman conquerors – much indeed as Anglo-Saxon language and culture absorbed them in England – and distanced them from their English connections. The crucial break in these patterns began with the Elizabethan conquest which was consolidated by Cromwell. His conquest, benefitting from new progress in communications and military technology, destroyed Irish political resistance. Moreover, both conquests were consolidated by settlements. One settlement, the Jacobean in the North-East, was effective enough with time to create new population proportions. The Cromwellian settlement established both a land-owning caste and a new urban administrative, professional and merchant class that held the island in a pervasive grip after the Williamite wars and reduced the original inhabitants to a condition approaching serfdom. This latter settlement also was to lie behind a change of language in the island and to set the style of Irish/Anglo-Irish English. In each settlement there was a new factor of distinctiveness and division, namely, religion. It enabled the settlers to remain separate and provided them with an instrument for the differential sharing of the island's resources.

From the seventeenth century on the resistance of the smaller island's population took on political shape and Irish nationalism in the modern sense came into existence. Gaelic culture and Catholicism lived in a symbiosis with one another where religious freedom and land were being fought for – and later on political rights. The Act of Union in 1801 consolidated Protestant rule by adding British parliamentary control to the more precarious hold of an Irish minority. Yet while religion was to decay as a factor in the larger island it remained strong in the smaller island. From the latter part of the nineteenth century on a Gaelic nationalism that took its Catholicism for granted confronted an alliance of imperial and Protestant interests. Early in the twentieth century Gaelic nationalism, having mostly won the battle for land and voting rights, took over the island in those counties where the retreating British and Protestant alliance could not, or did not want to, hold out.

While all this was happening the structures and technology of Europe were changing dramatically. Britain had led the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century and had rapidly become the most industrialised and urbanised country in the world. In the process its interests diverged more and more from those of the smaller island. Its own people rapidly left the land. Proportionately more people stayed on the land in Ireland. But the Irish experience was made historically bitter by the great famine of 1845-1847. Moreover, Irish moves to cities were culturally more alienating as they constituted emigration from one country to other countries, mostly Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia, and not movement within one country, in other words, exile. The only part of Ireland that came into the industrial revolution was Belfast which developed like Glasgow and Liverpool and quite unlike Dublin and Cork. This development which like that in contemporary American cities generated communal living patterns, and economically competitive ethnic organisations served to separate further the two communities in the northeastern part of the island and divided still more the interests of the north-east from those of the rest of the island.

Independence in 1921-22 offered the first opportunity to most of Ireland to break free from the pattern of an agricultural region within an industrialised state. But structural factors, economic and political, slowed up for a long time Irish efforts to diversify and modernise the new state's economy. The trend of Irish efforts bore remarkable resemblances to those of Canada and Australia which, though better endowed resource-wise than Ireland and achieving faster growth rates, had inherited similar structural problems. Moreover, the relatively non-violent break with Britain set the pattern for later colonial breaks, ranging from India and Burma to Ghana and Nigeria. Both the Irish and Indian secessions upset the British deeply – the one because of the apparently long historical intimacy with a people like themselves and the other because it had become during the nineteenth century a symbol of the extraordinary imperial achievements of a small offshore European island. In dealing with the new post-colonial era of 1947 the British had to come to terms with a reduced international role. But in dealing with the Irish after 1922 it had to treat suddenly as independent strangers those who had, albeit with some patronising disdain and discrimination, been received as part of themselves. Finally, it is worth saying that at a moment when the Irish question has again become acute, Indian and related issues have also in the wake of an unexpected consequence of empire, namely, large-scale immigration, come to pose problems in Britain more intimate and more acute than were ever posed by the Irish.

2. *Civil strife in Ireland and the United Kingdom:* The 'troubles' in Ulster remain a stumbling block to understanding and fuller co-operation between Ireland and Britain. In these 'troubles' there are three different conflicts. First, there is a struggle for civil rights, especially at this stage economic and cultural rights. Secondly, there is a sporadic conflict going on between armed Catholics and armed Protestants, the latter being found both inside and outside the official security forces. Thirdly, there is an armed insurrection by some republicans against the authority of the British Crown in Northern Ireland.

Owing to the Ulster problem there is a degree of tension between the peoples and governments of the two islands. Irish people generally sympathise with Northern Catholics though they do not equally sympathise with the armed war and insurrection. They are ambivalent however about Irish unity, and would almost certainly become more ambivalent were it ever to look a practical proposition. In their turn the British dislike Irish terrorists, though this dislike remains relatively notional until they carry outrages into British cities. Yet they also differentiate little enough between groups of Irishmen and many wish a pox on all their houses. Moreover, many British persons sympathise with moves to disengage from Ireland, where they see Britain as suffering unfair international odium, carrying excessive economic costs and sacrificing young lives. In this context it should also be said that British refusals to blame all Irish dwellers in Britain testify to the admirable restraint of a mature society and people. And the well-nigh universal rejection by the Irish in Britain of support for irredentism also suggests sense and decency in an adopted land.

Irish and British governments find themselves in contorted positions. No Irish government can easily discard a nationalist tradition that goes back beyond Tone to the poets of the 'hidden Ireland'. They accept that they have to hold a watching brief on behalf of Northern nationalist groups whose rights remain inadequately acknowledged and whose security in the event of British withdrawal would be dangerously threatened. Moreover, they carry immense costs in security operations – proportionately far greater than those of the United Kingdom – in denying safe bases

to the Northern insurgents. Under these circumstances they can react only unhappily and angrily as successive British governments alternate between accepting that they have a right to be consulted on Northern Ireland and rejecting in the name of exclusive sovereignty any such right. While British governments are awkwardly caught in the trammels of conventional doctrines of sovereignty in respect of United Kingdom territory they have come increasingly to weaken in their belief in such doctrine; and some government members avow quietly that they remain in Ulster only to prevent the predictable and catastrophic consequences of a premature withdrawal, whether on the Ulster communities or on a neighbouring and friendly government in Dublin.

3. *Little and large:* No small cultural group lives easily alongside the culture of a bigger group, more especially if the culture of the larger group is as powerful, cultivated and well-organised as is British/English culture, whether in literature, music, painting or drama. Moreover, a larger culture can assimilate the artistic contribution of a smaller, benefit from its stimulus and integrate in some measure its insights and emphases whereas the smaller one often has the sense of being swamped. Yet the smaller group can benefit from access to the economies of scale that permit, for example, quality newspapers and media channels to be maintained by a larger group. Similarly writers from a small culture gain from access to the developed audiences and bigger markets of the large culture although in the process they may face temptations to conform to tastes alien to their best insights. Finally, there is the inescapable observation that the Irish – in a reaction that inverts a process occurring in most other nineteenth century countries – did not substitute a doctrine of ethnocentrism for Christian ethics as a basis for moral superiority but rather retained a painful sense of inferiority in culture and a massive sense of superiority in religion.

The previous paragraph however poses the problem of culture on the level of the educated minority. The problem is posed more awkwardly these days for the smaller group by the popular and more uniforming culture of mass newspapers, television and entertainment. In the latter area the size and power of market forces dominate and penetrate. Given reading, viewing and listening opportunities and habits it is reasonable for concerned Irish persons to fear the impact of contemporary mass media and the amorphous levelling that mass entertainment threatens to bring about as well as the culturally anodyne if functionally useful effect of mass produced artefacts. The fact is, moreover, that whatever distinctiveness from others as well as from one another Irish groups north and south possess, they are pervaded at least superficially, and possibly more deeply as television makes its mark, by an Anglo-American (mid-Atlantic) culture that sets dress fashions, creates most tastes in music and influences opinions on international affairs.

Yet in this tension of large and small let me say immediately two positive things, one on human achievement and the other on social distinctiveness. The first is that both mass media and industrial productivity are the outcome of a contemporary technology that has given to modern persons a new capacity to cope with, control and develop – in spite of ecological and social mistakes and injustices – the resources of nature. Ordinary people have conceived a confidence in dealing with the world that is new to human history; and they possess comforts that kings did not own in ages past. The second point is that it is clear that in being able through economic achievement to escape from the 'poor mouth' of penury and, in spite of being exposed to myriad outside influences, Irish culture has retained its distinctiveness – a sense of belonging among a people with

a common history and long memories, lives still penetrated by a strong religious faith, and embroidered with distinctive accents, humour and games. Purists may well complain that Irish religion and culture remain unintegrated. But without trying to define distinctiveness one has only to read those contemporary Irish novelists who describe Irish society to recognise that altogether it could not be anywhere else. Indeed one has only to compare two good introductory studies of the novel in Britain and Ireland – Walter Allen's and Benedict Kiely's – to notice the difference of the traditions, a difference that comes out in contrasting historical memories, social situations, humour and values. And historically the success that the Irish have had in resisting Anglo-Saxon assimilation is matched – and confirmed in its possibilities – by the manner that central and eastern European minorities, for example, have withstood German and Russian cultural pressures.

C: Reflecting on common possessions

The most precious things held in common are values. But these are enhanced in being formulated and communicated in a shared language. And though historical, political and economic structures have come apart, new and forward-looking linkages are in the process of being formed.

1. Socio-cultural factors

(a) *Christian values*: It would be an exaggeration to describe Britain as a Christian country. But equally it would be wrong to describe it as post-Christian. It is a country which in the roots of its modern formation was dominantly Christian, which still remains mostly if vaguely Christian in affiliation and outlook and which has a vigorous and disproportionately influential practising Christian minority. The British religious tradition – English, Scottish and Welsh – would once have been described as Protestant. But if it still is Protestant in the sense of rejection of papal authority and absence of corporate union with the Roman and Catholic tradition it has moved, especially in its Anglican form, a long way from the hostilities of the Reformation period. It has sought to reconcile a national and cultural tradition with a sense of identification with Christian faith and theology common to the Greek and Roman traditions and flexible ecumenical advances.

Irish Catholicism which once served to distinguish the deprived bulk of the Irish from settlers and landlords has retained more than other Roman traditions a suspicion of Protestantism. This suspicion is deepened and complicated by the continuing use of religion in Northern Ireland as a demarcation line between political protagonists and as a tool of social and economic discrimination. Yet contemporary Catholicism, developing post-Vatican II trends and drawing strength from movements in the American, French, Dutch and German churches, is capable of strong fellowship with English and Irish Anglicans as well as with English and Irish Methodists in a convergence of basic doctrines and growth of religious fellowship. Relations with Presbyterians for both theological and political reasons are more complicated. Underlying the drawing together of Christian groups in these islands lie two other changes besides those mentioned. One is that theological affinities, emerging from new scriptural exegesis and theological reflection unite intellectual progressives across denominational boundaries and divide them more from traditionalists within their own churches than from one another. Similarly, justice and peace issues, including stands on nuclear weapons, have the same unifying effect. In the event there is not only a growth of fellowship but a softening, if not a blurring, of denominational lines. Finally, abler and more perceptive persons in all Irish Churches are aware of the minority position and the intellectual state of siege of Christianity throughout the world; and for such

reasons they have begun to emphasise the worth of their shared belief, religious fellowship and organisational co-operation rather than maintaining separation from one another in the name of historical differences, doctrinal purity and ecclesial distinctiveness.

(b) *Democratic traditions*: The profoundest bond – and inversely the absence of a great obstacle – between Britain and Ireland is a common acceptance of a democratic system. Obviously there are flaws in each state's system. Yet in each, governments are open to challenge through free speech, elections and the courts.

Paradoxically the smaller country has obtained its apprenticeship in democratic functioning from the tutelage system of its quasi-colonial rulers. In turn it has improved in certain respects on its mentor, not least in its electoral system and its freedom from the trammels of a mostly hereditary second house. Again the smaller state has benefited from the continuing strength of a neighbouring democracy. Yet its own achievements have been too little appreciated in Britain and taken too readily for granted. It might easily have been predicted, for example, in the early 1920s that a new state that had no full experience of democratic freedom – and that immediately on independence experienced a civil war, that had few material resources, that was about to head into a world depression, and that had a political elite which had been recruited disproportionately from among guerrilla leaders – would not have stayed a democracy. The Irish Free State by almost any law of comparative politics should have gone the way of Greece, Portugal and Spain, not to mention the worse cases of Italy and Germany. But it did not; and it has stayed as one of the world's greatest, if smallest, democracies. It did have two advantages in avoiding pressures that might have brought excessively great weight to bear on its political system. First, there was the continuing structural link with Britain that offered an easy immigration outlet and safety valve for many of the ambitious and unemployed, even if this advantage was offset in some measure by disadvantages inherent in possessing a larger, richer and more industrialised country as a dominating trading partner. Secondly, a fortuitous piece of history had left a million recalcitrant Protestants with their own and their minorities' problems outside the new Irish state at a time when greater economic frustration compounded by political alienation might have unbalanced a fragile democracy.

Whatever about recent history we have in these islands two democratically elected governments that respect one another. Each government also sympathises with the responsibility of the other to a relatively informed electorate. Moreover, if the British government has refused to let Northern Ireland to be incorporated into the Republic without majority consent it is also true that the Southern government has been able to measure Northern government by British standards and argue the necessary reforms that those standards require. In spite of tensions of competing interests and the difficulties of maintaining communication, there is crucial trust between these two democratic governments of free peoples who appreciate one another's values, who have in good measure to make policies openly, and who have to carry their own peoples along with them in implementing policies.

(c) *Linguistic inheritance*: Except for scattered groups of Gaelic speakers and some two-fifths of the Welsh as well as immigrant groups from the New Commonwealth, these islands are English-speaking. Nothing seems more natural to the vast majority of the British and nothing more highly ambivalent to a small politically active minority of the Irish. Linguistic lethargy, the failure of efforts to revive Gaelic, and economic advantage have kept the Irish English-speaking. Beyond these factors there also has been a cert-

ISLINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

The Irish in Islington Project may be running an Irish history course here in the autumn term. Ring 281 3225 for details.
North London Polytechnic are running an Irish Studies course with Islington AEI on the theme of the Irish in London. Ring Diane Willcocks on 607 2789 x 2061 for further details.

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In the past twenty years much new research has been done on Irish political and social history. This series of six classes will examine the changes as follows:

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 2. The rediscovery of 18th century Ireland.
 3. Grattan's parliament - success or symbol?
 4. How poor was 19th century Ireland?
 5. Emigration - the result of landlordism or American dream?
 6. Independent Ireland - A Catholic, Gaelic Ireland.
- This class may continue after Christmas if demand warrants it.

TUTOR: BERNARD CANAVAN

OTHER AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE SCHOOL OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY STUDIES
38 Lewisham Way, New Cross SE14 (692 7171/8653).

IRISH STUDIES

Mondays 7-9 for 3 terms from 22 September. Fee £28.

A course run by a committee of past and present students looking at various aspects of Irish Studies.

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2 Windmill Lane, Stratford E15 (519 5089)

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TUTOR: BERNARD CANAVAN

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

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2. LITERATURE AND DRAMA

INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Fees for ILEA classes: £26 a year (three terms)
(£10 a term; £6 summer term).

HAMMERSMITH AND NORTH KENSINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Last Chance Centre, 87 Masbro Road W14 (748 3020 x 3760)

LONDERIN DRAMA GROUP

Wednesdays 8.30-10.00 for 3 terms from 24 September

This group largely consists of young (16-25) second-generation Irish people. New members are welcome.

PUTNEY-WANDSWORTH ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)
Holham School, Charlwood Road, SW15 (789 8255; 788 2157)

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Wednesdays 10-12 (mornings) for 24 meetings from 24 September

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TUTOR: MRS M. BARAITSER
(Organised by University of London Extra-Mural Studies Department)

OTHER AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

CITY UNIVERSITY, CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION, EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES

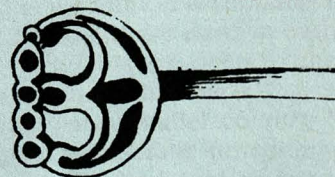
Northampton Square, London EC1 (253 4399 x 3268/9)

W.B. YEATS

Mondays 6.30-8.30 for 10 weeks from 27 April. Fee £20.

Explore the work of one of Ireland's greatest modern poets.

TUTOR: CHARLES DONOGHUE



3. IRISH LANGUAGE COURSES

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(£10 a term; £6 summer term).

CAMDEN ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Irish Centre, 52 Camden Square NW1 (485 0051)

Stage 1 - Fridays 6.30-8 starting 26 September - £1 per year

Stage 3 - Fridays 8-9.30 starting 26 September - £1 per year

TUTOR: SIOBHAN O'NEILL

plus children aged 7 and over:

Saturdays 10-12 starting 13 September - no fee.

CENTRAL ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Hugh Myddelton Centre, Sans Walk EC1 (388 7106)

Stage 1 - Wednesday 6.30-8 starting 24 September - £1 per year

Stage 2 - Wednesdays 8-9.30 starting 24 September - £1 per year

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CHELSEA - WESTMINSTER ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Westminster City School, Palace St SW1 (589 2569)

Stage 1 - Tuesdays 6-8 starting 23 September

TUTOR: SEAMUS KENNEALLY

CLAPHAM - BATTERSEA ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Latchmere School, Latchmere Road SW11 (223 5876)

Stage 1 - Thursdays 6.45-8.15 starting 25 September - £1 per year

Stage 2 - Thursdays 8.30-10 starting 25 September - £1 per year

TUTOR: SIOBHAN O'NEILL

HAMMERSMITH AND NORTH KENSINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Mary Boon School, Earsby ST W14 (opp. Olympia) (603 7271 after 6 p.m.)

Stage 1 - Tuesdays 6.30-8 starting 23 September

Stage 2 - Tuesdays 8-9.30 starting 23 September

TUTOR: CHRISTY QUINN

Brackenbury School, Brackenbury Road W6 (749 1515)

Beginners Family Workshop

Wednesdays 6.30-8.30 starting 24 September

TUTOR: COLETTE PRENDERGAST

WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE (for men and women)

Crowndale Road NW1 (387 2037)

Fees £26 a year plus £2.50 college fee (retired, unemployed and school students pay quarter of the course fee).

Stage 1 - Fridays 7-9 starting 26 September

TUTOR: PATRICK COYLE

HACKNEY ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Woodberry Down Branch, Woodberry Grove N4 (805 5555)

Stages 4/5 - Mondays 7-9 starting 22 September - £1 per year

TUTOR: SIOBHAN O'NEILL

ISLINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Archway Branch; George Orwell School Annexe, Holland Walk N19 (272 4772)

Stage 1 - Thursdays 7-9 starting 25 September

TUTOR: PATRICIA COFFEY

(Organised in conjunction with Irish in Islington Project 281 3225)

HENRY COMPTON YOUTH CENTRE (ILEA)

Ashby Mill School, Prague Place, Bedford Terrace SW2

(767 1772 after 7 pm)

All stages workshop - Wednesdays 6-9 starting 3 September

TUTOR: SEAMUS KEANNEALLY

OTHER AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, GOLDSMITH'S COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY STUDIES
28 Lewisham Way, New Cross SE14 (692 7171/8653)
Stage 1 - Tuesdays 6.30-8 starting 23 September - fee £21
Stage 2 - Tuesdays 8-9.30 starting 23 September - fee £21

TUTOR: SIOBHAN O'NEILL

CONRADH NA GAEILGE

Irish Club, 82 Eaton Square SW1
Bunscoil London
An Scoil Ghaelach
Dé Sathairn 10.30-14.30
Múinteoir: Seán O Dónelláin
Eolas: 578 3010

CUIDEACHTA

Irish Club, 82 Eaton Square SW1
Conversation and song in Irish-beginners and intermediate.
Last Friday each month 8-10.30 pm. Open to all.

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2 Windmill Lane, Stratford E15 (519 5089)
A beginner's language class will commence in September. Ring the above number for further details.

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Kilburn Polytechnic, Priory Park Road NW6 (328 8241/624 5157)
Stages 1 and 2: Mondays 6.30-9.30 from 16 September
(Organised in conjunction with Irish Commission for Culture and Education (ICCEL) 624 9990/3158)



4. IRISH DANCING CLASSES

INNER LONDON EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Fees for ILEA classes: £26 a year (three terms)
(£10 a term; £6 summer term)

CAMDEN ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Irish Centre, 52 Camden Square NW1 (485 0051)
CEILI DANCING - Thursdays 7.30-9.45 from 25 September.
TUTOR: ÉAMONN HERLIHY (272 5064)
(There may also be a Monday class; contact Anton Coyle (272 5815 for details).

CHELSEA - WESTMINSTER ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Marlborough School, Sloane Avenue SW3 (589 2569)
IRISH STEP DANCING - Fridays 7.30-9.30 from 26 September
TUTOR: TERRY BOWLER

HAMMERSMITH AND NORTH KENSINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Brackenbury School, Brackenbury Road W6 (749 1515)
CEILI DANCING - Wednesdays 7.30-9.30 from 24 September
TUTOR: JOAN BURKE

HENRY THORNTON YOUTH CENTRE (ILEA)

Ashby Mill School, Prague Place, Bedford Terrace SW2 (737 1772 after 7 pm)

CEILI DANCING - Thursdays 6.30-8.30 from 4 September
TUTOR: TERRY BOWLER

IRISH DANCING - Wednesdays 6-9 from 3 September
TUTOR: NANCY BOWLER

ADVANCED IRISH DANCING - Mondays 7-9 from 1 September
TUTOR: TERRY BOWLER

ISLINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Eden Grove Branch, Ringcross School, Georges Road N7 (607 4108; 226 6001)

IRISH STEP DANCING - Wednesdays 7-9 from 24 September
TUTOR: MAIRE CLERKIN
(Organised in conjunction with Irish in Islington Project 281 3225)

5. IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC CLASSES

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Tuesdays 6.30-9 from 23 September

TUTOR: MARY MOLLOY

HAMMERSMITH AND NORTH KENSINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Brackenbury School, Brackenbury Road W6 (749 1515)

IRISH TIN WHISTLE WORKSHOP (adults and children)

Wednesdays 7-9 from 24 September

TUTOR: MARY MOLLOY

ISLINGTON ADULT EDUCATION INSTITUTE (ILEA)

Archway Branch, George Orwell School Annexe, Holland Walk N19 (272 4772)

TRADITIONAL MUSIC - Mondays 7.30-9.30 from mid September
TUTOR: ELAINE JEFFRIES

(Organised in conjunction with Irish in Islington Project 281 3225)

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Thursdays 7-9.30 for three terms from 25 September. Fee £32. 50 plus £2.50 college fee (retired, unemployed and school students pay quarter of course fee).

TUTOR: PAUL GALLAGHER

HENRY THORNTON YOUTH CENTRE (ILEA)

Ashby Mill School, Prague Place, Bedford Terrace SW2 (737 1772 after 7 pm)

IRISH MUSIC

Wednesdays 6-9 from 3 September

TUTOR: MICHAEL O'CONNELL

OTHER AUTHORITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

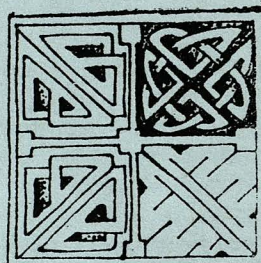
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TUTOR: PAUL GALLAGHER



ain pride and easefulness in their use of forms of English that have been moulded to Irish sensibilities and that draw on the structures and resonances of a Gaelic substratum. One might notice here in passing that in late nineteenth century Ireland, though cultural nationalism in words of W.V. Wallace about Czech nationalism was there 'to carry the torch for politics', it failed in its specific role to revive a traditional language but had rich results in games, folklore and music as well as in the transformation of an acquired language.

One of the unexpected returns from empire has been the spread and adaptation of English in once colonial territories. The Irish have – with the Americans – pioneered literary styles in English and have provided resources to the standard language in the way that English regional dialects did at an earlier stage, but with the greater nuances of confidence and reflexion of national groups. While the English have been tempted on occasion, especially in face of the outpouring of American works, to regret their lost monopoly, they have, by and large, been glad to glimpse other sensibilities through outstanding literature. In the formative literary period in the earlier part of this century the Irish output has been immensely rich: Synge, O'Casey and Shaw in the theatre; Joyce and Beckett in the novel; and the towering figure of Yeats in poetry. Moreover, these are only the foremost among a rich host of companions. James in the American novel, Pound in poetry and O'Neill in the theatre stand alongside the Irish. Only Hopkins in poetry and Lawrence in the novel – and no one that I can think of in the theatre – stand out in the same way in Britain.

2. Structural factors

(a) *Economic linkages*: While the Irish Republic has diversified its markets during recent decades Britain remains its principal trading partner. In 1983 39% of the Republic's exports went to Britain while 45% of imports came from there. In turn the Republic with its small population was Britain's fifth largest customer. Revealing, however, how much the Republic has changed its trading patterns the 1983 statistics show that live animals and dairy products were only 7% of the total exports of the Republic. Finally, one sensible economic reflexion is to acknowledge how much both countries benefit from one another's trade.

(b) *The EEC and global technology*: The simultaneous joining of the EEC by both countries has welded them together more closely, not only in so far as both have become politically and economically part of Western Europe but because within the EEC they have in broad measure, worked together and come closer functionally in the process. Yet one may also note the continued growth of Irish exports to EEC countries other than the United Kingdom – such exports in 1984 came close to matching those to the United Kingdom. However, beyond immediate economic exchanges both countries have made historic changes in joining the EEC. The larger country has set aside an imperial heritage and accepted a European, and Western European at that, location – even if the shreds of former glory and values are retained in disproportionately heavy military expenditure and the retention of nuclear weapons. The smaller country, on the other hand, has been able to move out from a position as the off-shore island of Britain and consolidate more concretely, visibly and continuously an international role gained earlier through the League of Nations and enlarged through the United Nations Organisation. In the process it is, however, taking strains on its self-conscious neutrality or non-alignment. It has also on occasion upset its immediate neighbour which, for example, resented bitterly its role on the Security Council of the United Nations during the Falklands War as well as its

subsequent opposition within the EEC to economic sanctions against Argentina.

Important though Western Europe is to both countries it is worth stressing that the world is – in technological terms of the relation of distance to travel capacity and communication – smaller now than Europe was in 1939. Both countries consequently have to face the global logic of technology. The smaller country with its weaker outreach must in good measure do so in conjunction with the larger, not least in reacting to its lead and in using its facilities. Both are also to be found on the same side of the North-South divide. Hopefully here the imperial memory and cosmopolitan tradition of the larger country and the idealism of the smaller, drawing on old and new Christian missionary heritages, will join to forge and maintain a broker's as well as a donor's role in the recognition of global interdependence and the justice of aid to the poor.

D: Cultural pluralism

In each island there is a dominant group that sets the cultural tone. In Britain the English do this; and in Ireland Gaelic nationalists, though less cogently owing to the influence of mid-Atlantic media culture, do the same. Again in each case the cultural situation is for historical and contemporary reasons more complex than cultural stereotypes – or for that matter received wisdom – would suggest.

The ingredients of English culture go back into the history of the peoples who have made up the English: Britons, Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians and Normans. Literature, drama, poetry, prose came to maturity in the Elizabethan era which coincided with both the consolidation of English unity and the arrival of English sea power. Later the industrial revolution in which Britain initially led the world fundamentally altered tradition as did a concomitant imperial spread. Latterly British economic growth has slowed. Britain has simultaneously had to come to terms with relatively large new minorities who for reasons of majority reactions and/or their own volition have remained distant from the traditional majority.

Colour differences have been prominent in rendering the new groups – Asian and West Indian in origin – separate as well as distinctive but particularly in the case of the Asian groups it is culture – in the sense of religion, language and social customs – that is the more deeply distinguishing feature. Historically the British have coped with immigrants by assimilating them. They are now faced with newcomers and with new British groups that resist assimilation and raise the issue of cultural pluralism.

The Irish have more awkwardly for a long time had to face the issue of cultural pluralism. The assimilation of the Normans, the 'Old Foreigners', continued with the partial, and perhaps now almost complete, assimilation of the Anglo-Irish but not before the latter had bequeathed a transforming heritage to the country, not least linguistically. Owing to concentrated numbers, land-holding, and the shape of industrialisation in the north-eastern counties, groups in that area stayed in some measure apart from the evolution of the rest of the island. In consequence, as well as there being cultural differences between the southern Irish provinces a greater cultural difference grew and persisted between them and most of Ulster. For a traditionalist grouping of peoples, close to the land, the result has been a cultural problem less complex than what the British face in their race relations but more deeply rooted historically and more strongly linked to political divisions and economic competition. Having said that, it is still true that cultural boundaries have been more fluid and more porous than political divisions.

In raising the issue of the plurality of cultures on both

islands – and in the larger island the existence of the Scottish and Welsh ethnic groups made for pluralism before the arrival of the new groups – the smaller island suffers from a problem of pluralism that is perceived as binary by its majority and that has not been fully accepted by the latter. The members of the Gaelic tradition have become a nation much as have other European groups, mainly in the course of the nineteenth century. The unionist groups in the North have remained more a community – that is, a group having a sense of common belonging, shared interests and objectives – than an historic nation. In part nineteenth century nationalist movements seem to have passed them by; and in part they have had an ambivalent relation to nationalism's crucial piece of land where they have had to urge cultivation against immemorial possession. In consequence, the Protestant community has had difficulty in defining its identity. Attempts to define an Ulster unionist identity have been further complicated by an assertion of contractual relationship with the government of the other island that makes the union conditional and that also shifts the final locus of government from Irish unionists as well as adding economic and military dependence.

In terms of identity – the legitimacy of association – both Irish groups have had difficulties with one another. The Gaelic groups have wavered between seeing Northern Protestants as usurpers who have stolen land and upbraiding them as recalcitrant Irishmen who refuse to accept their heritage. Conversely Northern Protestants, conscious of themselves as a community and proud of their work on the land and in industry, have tried to play down the relative artificiality of the existing boundaries of Northern Ireland (which were drawn up mainly to provide territory large enough for viability and small enough to ensure a Protestant majority) and have constantly ignored the presence of a Gaelic minority in their midst as they declare Ulster rightly theirs or treated the minority as illegitimate subversives.

Leaving aside for the moment the political and economic negotiation and conciliation that are required in Northern Ireland, it seems crucial to argue that those of the Gaelic tradition must accept the legitimacy of another tradition, allied and in many respects similar to their own, yet too consciously different to be merely Irish on the island of Ireland. Northern Protestants have been in Ireland for too long – longer than most groups have been in the United States – to be considered illegitimate; and they are not going to go away. Yet in their turn by trying to ignore the cultural dimensions of the Gaelic tradition in Ulster because they fear its political logic unionists only deepen the alienation of the Northern nationalist community and generate those sentiments that nourish insurrection. Moreover, Ulster Protestants need to accept their likeness to the other Irish groups, not least in a level of religious practice quite unlike the British levels as well as the way they draw on the whole island for a dimension of their identity. In any case in the eyes of almost all the rest of the British all the smaller island's inhabitants are Irishmen. Seamus Heaney reminds them:

Ulster is part of Paddyland,
And Londonderry
Is far away as New England
Or County Kerry.

It is also probably fair to say that were there no threat of political takeover from Dublin most Protestants would readily enough accept to be called Irish. They do in fact implicitly accept that designation when they play soccer, rugby and other games.

It is worth saying one word about music. While the smaller island is very much on the receiving end of music

and song it is still the case that its songs have had a disproportionate impact on the larger island. Moreover, its folk music contribution has been received as strong in authenticity and high in entertainment – one has only to observe the reception given to the Chieftains and many other folk groups at British venues as well as note the numbers of British folk fans who listen to *Raidió Telefís Éireann*.

In this connection the British government and its radio and television monopolies need to take seriously the Gaelic and Irish – these are not necessarily the same thing – dimensions of culture, especially in Northern Ireland. In this connection also there is a case for catering for Northern Irish Protestant aspects of culture – the latter groups are so bent on being British that they have not emphasised their own distinctiveness and remain the poorer for this reason. They will not look less British for being Irish since there is no monolithic British look in these times. The British state is culturally plural – and it seems a shame that an even-omnipotent patch of politics should constrain that pluralism.

Essentially what has been argued here is that both islands have to come to terms with cultural pluralism on their territories and that minorities who have arrived with differing legacies but with political legitimacy do not constitute intrusion or impurity. Any other outlook not only denies the human capacity creatively to re-define boundaries and recognise affinities but runs the risk of creating conflict and alienation. More positively, groups can draw strength from inter-cultural contact in thinking, social customs and artistic creation.

E: Roles of groups

There are three crucial groups involved in creating cultural patterns and styles that foster fellowship, and that yet can hinder its growth: the churches, schools and youth groups.

1. *Role of the churches:* What separates the main Christian churches these days is less theology than sentiments left over from the past, distinctivenesses that are cherished but that are cultural rather than religious, and insufficient organisational efforts to work out clerical roles in new tentative schemes of Christian reunion. In both Britain and Ireland – and in this respect they resemble most other European countries – religion has suffered from its conflation with politics. In Britain a Protestant tinge to nationalism has outlived the way in which most of the nation have ceased to be Anglican. In Ireland the Protestant and English discrimination threw Church and Gaelic nation together and turned the clergy into a nationalist leaven that lost its raising effect only gradually during the nineteenth century as religious discrimination was lifted and secular middle classes and lower middle classes came on the scene. The effect was to leave the upper clergy awkwardly ill-at-ease, first during the land war, later during the 1918-21 guerrilla war, and again in the early years of the Free State as they had to confront politicians with whom they shared nationality and with whom they could use religious persuasion mainly and no longer use religion as a political surrogate. English Catholicism in its turn has only recently emerged from a cultural ghetto; and it has suffered isolation from the great theological currents of the modern Church. In Northern Ireland religion has gone on furnishing political boundaries – a method of demarcating groups and entitlements – long after it ceased to furnish this function in most European countries. In consequence, if religion has played a political role, and one not always to the credit of religion, it may also be possible to draw on religious strength and logic to ease political and cultural confrontation.

In Northern Ireland church members and clerics have mostly shared the bitter sentiments, ugly stereotypes and

opposing ambitions of their political communities. At worst clerics could be described as chaplains to warring tribes. At best they have wrung hapless hands as their co-religionists have made their own political and moral decisions with scant regard for their official pastors. Part of the trouble with a religious approach to moral and political matters in Ireland is that the clergy of all denominations – and this is both a strength and a weakness – have long been – and in good measure still are – elders of their communities at least as much as they have been ministers of Christ.

In practice there are two crucial areas in Northern Irish life in which the churches have not come to terms with one another. The first is marriage; and the second is schooling. In the case of marriage there is a bogey and a reality. The bogey on the Catholic side is that mixed marriages will weaken the faith of Catholic partners and that they will harm the unity of the Catholic community. In Britain where the Catholic stand against mixed marriages has mostly had to yield to demography and the breakdown of Catholic 'apartness' these dangers may well be present. But in Northern Ireland such marriages are likely to be a small fraction of all marriages so that this fear is quite unreal. On the Protestant side in the North is the belief that Catholic intransigence is meant to ensure that all children of such marriages are brought up as Catholics and as nationalists and that they are – together with a calculatedly higher birth rate – a means of increasing Catholic and nationalist numbers. Moreover, both bogies play down the interfaith and intercommunal worth of mixed marriages in a region where marriages bring together not only individuals but families. A reality on the Southern Protestant side is that a tiny community faced with an intransigent and devout majority is in danger of being absorbed – and undoubtedly one factor in explaining the decline of the Southern Protestant community since 1922 is that part of it has been absorbed into the Catholic majority through marriage. The other reality is that the Irish Catholic Church has been slow to apply in Ireland recent more flexible legislation available from Rome to soften previous intransigence in mixed marriages. In this way it renounced a possibility, though a qualified one, of religious conciliation in the whole island and also of political conciliation in the North.

The second issue that separates religious communities in Northern Ireland is education. This issue does not divide the respective clergies because they are agreed to maintain separate systems. In practice the geographical divisions of the religious communities will entail a great deal of segregation of schooling, yet it seems a pity that where rationalisation of educational resources is required that denominations cannot accept the worth of community integration and reach agreement on religious instruction. In teacher education specifically they may well come to regret a failure to reach agreement on pooled resources and guaranteed religious components when demographic realities and economic constraints combine to eliminate separated facilities. Christians are called to peace as a basic value. One wonders why churchmen so readily set it aside for narrow organisational reasons. Perhaps it is difficult to avoid the impression that no small part of the intransigence on education is that the latter is the last sphere of secular power and patronage available to the clergy. In Southern Ireland also the denominations are agreed on educational separation. Paradoxically here separate schools which are generously supported for the religious minority are a gesture of conciliation. The issue in the Republic is less denominational education than how long the state apparatus and increasingly better educated community leaders are going to accept a considerable clerical role in organising schools.

Overall one wants to argue the worth of ecumenism in both Irelands where it lags as it does in most English-

speaking countries. In Northern Ireland this lag owes much to contemporary politics. The lag in the Republic and Britain owes something to a lack of theological culture, especially on the Catholic side. But it owes something also to Irish resistance to religious and political oppression in the past and to attitudes that endure. The churches however may well survive best now only if they have the intellectual and organisational adaptability for closer ecumenical relations – using opportunities that range from facing common social concerns together through shared worship and swapped pulpits to theological meetings – in a situation in which threats to religion come not from inter-denomination rivalry but from a closed scientific culture and the religious apathy of industrial society. The era of sociological religion is over. Finally, since all the denominations stretch into, and across, both islands, strengthened inter-denominational relations can only deepen the common respect of peoples for one another.

2. *Role of schools:* Schools on both islands have a three-fold role to play: they can adjust syllabuses and adapt courses; they can organise exchanges; and they can develop an orientation of understanding, conciliation and complementarity.

(a) *Courses and syllabuses:* In this section many illustrations could be used. For sake of time I confine myself to two subjects, history and literature:

(i) *History:* Irish schools have little choice except to learn about Britain. British history has intruded too excessively into their own past for it to be ignored. Moreover, British history is too much part of European and world history for it not to be taken into account. Yet there is a case for the extension of modern trends that move on from the learning of political history into social and economic history. The worth of such teaching is that tends on the one hand to emphasise the profound political developments which the growth of democracy and tolerance are, and on the other hand to depict the human dimensions of peoples that overflow the boundaries that their own ruling classes have set them.

British schools may seem more easily able to exempt themselves from studying Irish history. Yet the islands have for more than two thousand years been an inter-communicating entity – after all it has historically been much easier to sail between the islands than to travel by land over long distances within either island – whose history has been shared in settlement patterns, politics, religion and language for British schools to pass it by. Moreover, Ireland has been Britain's protocolony in which many patterns of communication and control were initiated long before they were imposed on later, larger and more far-flung colonies. Finally, as has already been argued, Britain is now multi-cultural beyond hope of reversal. Irish history helps to explain how the situation has come about and how the Irish provide – like other ethnic minorities – a presence that suggests the accommodation needed to live with historical survivals that are no rudimentary relics but organic parts of great vitality.

(ii) *Literature:* The Irish simply cannot ignore English literature. For one thing it provides access to the origins of their own speech and writing. If Gaelic is their traditional language and if its style and context lie beneath the English that most of them speak, English is their mother tongue. Moreover, English literature which is so utterly rich in drama, novels and poetry offers an insight into human sensibility that cultured persons cannot seriously avoid and to which schools provide a

crucial access. In a deep sense the Irish share literary ancestors with the British. They need to recognise that ancestry and accept the affinity, indeed consanguinity, that comes out of it.

Yet it is possible in Irish schools to teach English literature as if it were part of a heritage that somehow is detached from the people who made it – as if, for example, those who defeated O'Neill and O'Donnell at Kinsale had not been part of the great audience that made Shakespeare possible. It is also the case – though it is less often done than the detached approach – to teach English as a foreign literature or the literature of a foreign people. Yet it is not possible to separate a literature from the minds and hearts of those who composed it and whose values, interests and sentiments it reflects. Moreover, it is no foreign literature but one whose words and sentences work their way through Irish lips and on to Irish pens. While the great folk poetry of the hidden Ireland – like its music – still carries the living resonance of Irish life, English literature with Shakespeare, Wordsworth, the Brontës, the latter with their own Irish ancestry, and others remains a more conscious and cultivated, though not profounder, influence on writers than the Gaelic poets who had no corresponding dramatists or novelists or leisured audience with which to forge a continuing language. In short, literature unlike politics cannot maintain concepts of undivided and unshared political sovereignty or for that matter harbour illusions of cultural purity based on false evidence of separated distinctiveness.

Essentially what this argument is driving at is that literature reflects the genius and mores of the people who have created it and profoundly influences a people who make it their own. For those reasons English literature today in the hands of Irish teachers leads at its best to a love affair with a great and attractive people as well as to a self-aware taking up of intimate influences on the making of the mother tongue of almost all the Irish. There is much more to Irish speech and Irish writing than the impact of English and its literature. But without taking the latter into account crucial dimensions are perilously ignored and a wonderful human opportunity of sharing a common humanity missed.

The British in their turn in facing towards Ireland and literature find a wealth of creativity that proportionately far outstrips Irish political influence or Irish economic resources into the modern world. They know how such writers have entered into their history and the making of their language. Finally, in this context one needs at least to draw attention to the intercourse that has been started up between the contemporary Gaelic poets of Ireland and Scotland.

If for reasons of history and sensibility English teachers in Britain draw on Irish writing they can also use literature to depict the human traits of a people who have so often been misunderstood by the English, not least because they have simultaneously been so close to them and yet been so unlike them. There is also a case for drawing attention to the hard-nosed if imaginative technique of Joyce's novels, the calculating descriptions and evaluations of Shaw's plays and the self-conscious craftsmanship of O'Connor's short stories, all of which are far removed from stereotyped images of the feckless Irish. The English have to face the paradox that Anglo-Irish literature simultaneously belongs to them and bears the intimate mark of a different people. If one is to change the metaphor from that of a love affair for the smaller people to a metaphor for the larger people one may refer to their need to know and respect their cousins in an extended family where there is familiarity and trust and where the obligation is to recognise at once differ-

ences and aspirations.

(b) *Visits and exchanges:* On the organisational side I want to put forward some simple suggestions. First, there is a case for school visits between the countries. Too often school visits are projected under the guise of foreign language learning. In fact mostly they contribute culturally; and seldom do they bring much linguistic gain. For such reasons, while not ignoring the linguistic dimension it is worth arguing that school visits should take place for good cultural reasons between Britain and Ireland. Britain has historical riches of all kinds. Ireland has rich neolithic and early mediaeval antiquities as well as a variety of other things. Moreover, British children have the opportunity of seeing a culture that is different from theirs, and that is articulated through a friendly people in a common language who possess no small gift in that language. Secondly, student exchanges can be used for the building of individual and family linkages across boundaries and sea. Thirdly, governments might underpin teacher exchanges, particularly teachers of history, geography, literature – but not confined to these subjects – so that more understanding and communication can be developed and the development gains maintained. In this respect also one might argue for a modest level of support for Irish studies in British universities and polytechnics. Finally, where links are organised with the continent British and Irish schools could in certain cases combine to send their children abroad together and have them profit from inter-communication with one another as well as with continental groups. Not least, they might well discover how much more they have in common with one another than with persons of other European cultures.

3. *Role of youth groups:* Youth organisations have certain advantages that schools have: they reach persons before prejudices have formed and hardened; and they can play serious roles in forming ideas, setting up contacts and developing fellowship. Again a crucial instrument in this process is the exchange of persons between islands as well as the undertaking of joint ventures. Scout groups have taken such initiatives; and many other organisations can reasonably follow suit.

Sports clubs already exchange fixtures. Obviously that kind of initiative could be taken much further. It is worth noticing in passing that those groups that play rugby in both islands form a relatively integrated and understanding community in which there is a great deal of fellowship. It may be remarked also that rugby – a mostly middle-class game – is played on an all-Ireland basis. Perhaps soccer which is a mostly working-class game could at least intermittently be played on an all-Ireland basis – had this been the case would the present home international system so easily have collapsed? In any case the support and the passion in Dublin for teams like Manchester United should be set aside lightly for its worth as an anglophile factor – though it sadly reflects the languishing state of Irish soccer except as a nursery for better and richer leagues. The removal of the Gaelic Athletic Association's ban in recent years on foreign games, in practice soccer and rugby, has been a considerable step forward. Beyond that there is a case for removing the ban on RUC personnel. But there is need in turn for unionist acceptance of Gaelic games, especially in facilitating a movement in all Northern schools towards playing such games as well as international games. Finally, if both governments are serious about supporting practical steps towards friendship, they need to find the small sums of money that underpin sports exchanges and visits as well as other cultural exchanges.

F: Conclusion

To draw together the threads of this talk I want to refer to three things: the selectivity of tradition, the plurality of cultures, and the convergence of peoples. The first theme indicates that peoples not only inherit their history but make history; the second theme draws attention to the varied traditions of these islands; and the third takes in a sense of common humanity, the community of neighbours and the interlocked interests of peoples.

(a) *Selectivity of tradition*: The strength of tradition is that it offers a collective memory that is crucial to the distinctiveness of a people as well as being indispensable to individuals for understanding themselves as well as their community. It also offers thought-out ways of reflecting and acting that provide patterns and norms. In relation to historical memory as well as to respected values, accepted modes of behaviour and cherished cultural possessions, it suggests often a vision of the future that may in measure be idealised but that nonetheless shapes national aspirations and gives strength to social efforts. Yet peoples and their traditions change. They change in so far as human generations react with one another and successors never copy predecessors exactly; they change when different technologies serve to prompt alterations in social relations, in economic and other capacities, and in ways of thinking; and they change as their own populations grow more diverse and as their neighbours also undergo change. Taken all in all tradition provides great strength, especially strength for both retention and acquisition in the process of change. Conversely tradition loads intolerable and warping burdens on the shoulders of those who use it to declare it sacrosanct in an essentialist or unchanging form. Finally, since peoples change as they draw on tradition they inevitably draw on tradition relevantly and selectively. In a word, they inherit history; and they set about making different but continuing history.

It would be invidious to seek to apply directly these reflections on tradition to the main cultures that make up the society/societies of these islands. All that they are intended to suggest is that no culture, especially not English, Irish or Scots-Irish cultures, can afford to freeze in shapes taken directly from the past or permit themselves to be dictated to by memories of past achievements or interactions. Instead they need to face towards the future and its new situations and accept new linkages, linkages not least with one another. In this process they can be authentically themselves, integrating tradition, yet dynamically taking on the future. The mention of this social process introduces the plurality of the traditions of these islands, and so I want to turn to that pluralism again.

(b) *One out of many: E pluribus unum*: We need to face in our times the coming together of peoples. If technology has made the whole world smaller through the new pace and ease of travel, the spread and reach of communication media and the interdependence of economies, it has made world regions particularly small. Without going deeply into the factors that made the European Economic Community – the experience of the Marshall Plan, the move out from the Coal and Steel Community and the Benelux group, the realisation that a German political and economic vacuum harmed all Western Europe, and the genius of men like Monnet and Schumann – we should not cease to be astonished that countries, particularly France and Germany that had tried twice in a generation and in the context of two general Western European civil wars to destroy one another, were able thirteen years after the end of World War II in a marvellous co-ordination of initiatives to enter into a political-economic confederation. Moreover, this confederation later took in Britain, Ireland and Denmark, stret-

ched out to Greece and is about to attain a certain completion in embracing Spain and Portugal. The implicit logic in what I am saying is that if a wide confederation made sense it makes little sense for two islands that already form a sub-region of the unit not to recognise their close linkages and explicitly formalise their unity – as they already have in common voting rights and as they are apparently proposing to do through interparliamentary and inter-cultural bodies. Concepts of pure sovereignty make for poor political interpenetration, and even worse political practice, in the contemporary world.

The obvious problem in dealing with Britain is to convince its peoples that they have more than a little to gain from cultural relations with a small and geographically marginal group like the Irish. But the Celtic groups – Scots and Welsh – and the newer groups – Caribbean, Punjabi, Bengali, Sikh and others – can only benefit from a general acceptance of cultural diversity in which the Irish component is distinctive and articulate and which has its main base on its own island. Culture will go on being an issue in Britain when the issue of colour has receded. The English who carry more than other groups the psychological costs of cultural pluralism may well benefit from the mediating role of the Irish – always foreign and yet never quite so – as they seek to come to terms with others who are in historical terms foreign but who are in contemporary and legal terms entirely British. Moreover, the British have never failed to recruit the ablest Irish into the ranks of their skilled manpower, and they need to be able to do the same with the new minorities. They also have long reacted to the language and sensibility of the Irish writers, made their own of them and never thought that the resulting synthesis in the novel, poetry and drama was in any way a dilution of purity but rather a creative encounter that the English – and the British – took over in remaining quintessentially themselves. Finally, all the small cultures can benefit from one another in attempting to observe and co-ordinate their reactions to the English.

Let me end this section in saying a few words about cultural interaction generally. In doing this I am effectively returning to the *leitmotif* of this talk: the value of the various kinds and degrees of interaction among groups where the English hold a certain pre-eminence but no domination, and especially no monopoly. Fruitful cultural exchanges through thinkers, writers, artists and musicians – those who hold up a reflecting-inventing mirror to their societies and who plumb the unconscious and subconscious depths that lie beneath and inform rationality and make peoples to be most themselves – are the most natural thing in the world. Isolated cultures stagnate: the graveyard is full of their stunted corpses. Strong cultures take over ideas and practices from one another, are stimulated by these ideas and practices, and watch with rich wonder what happens when their own ideas are borrowed and begin to live with new life in other cultures. Cultures can become most consciously themselves and aware of their distinctiveness when they have some measure of comparison. And when cultures endeavour to understand one another with sympathy and to imitate one another with fidelity, each single culture grows in stature, gains in confidence and remains truer to its own genius than before the encounter.

(c) *Future and freedom*: If in the previous section I came back to the theme of dynamic cultural pluralism, let me finish in returning to my opening statement on convergence, encounter and context. Evidence of belonging in convergence runs through every theme touched on in this paper. The encounter in the convergence has problems yet not such as seem insurmountable in their difficulty or intolerable in their costs. The context, far from inhibiting con-

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vergence and the resolution of the problems of encounter, is in our time deeply supportive, suggesting on the one hand the worth of continuing distinctiveness in a world that in certain ways grows more uniform, and pointing on the other hand to the worth of regional and sub-regional co-ordination in a world where contemporary technology in its industrial productivity and its destructive weapons underlines the need for new global structures and styles of co-operation. We are free to make our future. We cannot

make this future with utter or arbitrary freedom but we can use freedom with vision and integrity to work with the current of a history that now offers us wonderful opportunities to reach out to new far-flung global neighbours and at the same time to cherish old and much loved close neighbours.

(Professor James O'Connell is head of the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford. This paper was first delivered at an Anglo-Irish Encounter conference in Dublin in November 1984 and also at the third national Irish Studies conference at Soar Valley College, Leicester, in February 1986.)

TOWARDS A HISTORY TRAIL OF THE IRISH IN BRITAIN

John Dunleavy

While sources available for those charged with promoting Irish studies are becoming more readily available, there are still gaps in our knowledge requiring attention. Currently, the picture is more healthy than it has probably ever been before, with the I.B.R.G. seminars at Leicester and elsewhere, the establishment of the Irish in Britain History Archive in London, publications such as the *Irish Post* and *I.S.I.B.*; while some idea of the quality of academic research can be gained from a perusal of Gilley and Swift's *The Irish in the Victorian city* (1985). Even so, one aspect which has received little attention is that of the need for the investigation and listing of the physical evidence in this country of Irish settlement.

One organisation which has experience of visiting locations associated with Irish immigration is the Connolly Association on Merseyside. Last year, for instance, the branch took a look at Chester, concentrating on those places which served to illustrate the Fenian Raid of 1867. This year the Lancashire town of Haslingden was the venue, that place being the adopted home of Michael Davitt, who participated in the Chester raid, though he is best remembered as the founder of the Land League. Desmond Greaves asked the present writer to be on hand to indicate the places most intimately connected with Davitt. He concluded: '... I don't know whether anything connected with Davitt is still standing – but that's just what we'd be glad to have you tell us.'

Such a suggestion presented few difficulties for one reared in Haslingden, for despite demolition and what passes for "redevelopment", there are numerous places of interest illustrative of Davitt's early life. The house where he spent most of his early years has long since gone, but it is still possible to trace the outline of the terraced home. Davitt's secondary education was acquired partly at the Mechanics' Institute, which now serves as the town's library; and the Wesleyan school, demolished some years ago. His six years employment with Henry Cockroft at the Post Office was also an educational experience, and that building (now a shop) was also visited. When he was eleven Davitt's right arm was amputated following a factory accident: the outer walls of the mill are still standing though not visited on this occasion due to constraints on time.

Later in life, having become a public figure, Davitt re-visited the town on a number of occasions to speak. In 1883, for instance, he addressed a capacity audience in the Public Hall (which still stands) as part of his land nationalisation campaign. Subsequently he spoke at St John's School, Baxenden – within sight of the factory where he had been maimed as a boy – and pleaded the need for accident compensation.

The Merseyside visitors found that there was still sufficient of interest to merit a leisurely stroll round the older parts of Haslingden, culminating at the site of Davitt's Wilkinson street home, now marked by a plaque. Other memorials can be found at St Mary's R.C. Church (where Davitt was confirmed), and – due to the understanding of the district council – a new street recently named in his honour. The local Irish League club might be regarded as a "living memorial" to the Land League founder. Perhaps not surprisingly one of the visitors enquired whether anyone else, apart from Davitt, had ever lived in Haslingden!

Not every immigrant to Britain could rank with Davitt in the hall of fame, yet it ought to be remembered that during his twenty year stay in Haslingden, between 1850 and 1870, he was the member of a family seeking refuge from the Great Famine. The Davitt family's eviction, and their search for a new home and the means of subsistence, were typical of thousands of Irish people of that generation. Opportunities for recreation were based largely on the home or parish, and outlets for national aspirations tended to centre on clandestine societies such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In other words, there was little to distinguish the Davitts from numerous other families uprooted by the Famine. If so many places connected with the Davitts still survive, then it follows that physical remains such as: churches, schools, homes, workshops, public houses, and clubs, illustrative of the Irish elsewhere in Britain, are still extant.

In 1984 when the *Irish Post's* Brendan Farrell visited the town, he observed: 'Should a history trail of the Irish in Britain ever be compiled, then Haslingden would occupy a prominent place.' While such an epigram may be flattering to the townspeople, who seem determined to foster the memory of Davitt, given that other equally eminent Irishmen, and women, have resided in this country, there must be potential for research and commemoration in other places. There are communities with evidence of Irish settlement stretching back two or three centuries: such a fact deserves recording. There are cities such as Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and, of course, London, which have acted as host for innumerable Irish people and merit inclusion in any Irish history trail. While there is no doubt that an understanding local council have done much to assist in the task of commemorating Davitt's years at Haslingden, it ought not be forgotten that the initiative came originally from the Irish community there. A history trail of the Irish in Britain will only materialise when many more communities are prepared to display the tenacity and foresight seen at Haslingden.

★★★★

REMINISCENCES OF A RELUCTANT EMIGRANT

Michael Hannon

Like many others it was with some reluctance that I left my native Galway back in June 1946. I did not leave it in a fit of gay abandon for the good life across the Irish Sea, or indeed did others who left around the same time. On reflection it was far from good for the vast majority of us. The emergency years in Ireland (1939–1946) were for the teenagers of that era, years of inactivity. It wasn't much use in "getting on your bike" to look for work. Rewarding work, or work on which one could rely upon for a livelihood was hard to be found. As the wage would say, much harder than finding Holy Water in an Orange Lodge.

In one final effort to find employment before embarking on "The Princess Maud" I did get on my bike to petition my county councillor for a position. He promised to do his best. We seemed to live on promises then. He emphasised however that it was virtually impossible to obtain suitable employment owing to "the times that were in it". My ten mile journey to Tuam left me sore in more ways than one, especially riding on solid tyres.

Years later the good man himself Bobby Burke sold his estate and went to some part of Africa as a lay missionary. Bobby Burke, a protestant, was a dedicated Labour man in his day. The pity of it was that he did not progress in the political life of North Galway as many would have wished he had done.

Yet, unlike many other political minded men of his day he did at least experience and understand what it was like to be separated from home and friends.

My own separation, and the separation of others from their homeland was brought about by the economic conditions of the day. It was at times a harrowing experience for the majority of us. For many of the Irish girls who emigrated immediately after the war it was a particularly lonely time.

The men who for the most part were engaged in the construction industry could at least meet and converse with their own kind all through the working week. On the other hand many Irish girls were in employment, the nature of which prevented them from mixing with their own countrymen and women frequently. The week-ends were much looked forward to in those days. We were still in the dance band days in the late forties and early fifties, therefore, a little bit of Ireland was reflected in the Sunday night hop. Sunday night dances were held in practically every Catholic hall in most major towns and cities in Britain in those days.

It was only at Christmas time that a thinning out came. Many of whom are now of the older generation, and who were as yet unmarried, headed for Holyhead and home, and a little relaxation. As the poet said . . . 'Parting can be such sweet sorrow'. Yes; that's the emotion most common to all who are destined to emigrate, Sorrow.

That was certainly what I felt that June day in 1946. In the school readers of the thirties and forties I had read the thoughts and experiences of others as expressed in prose and poetry by Irish writers. These thoughts and experiences of others were soon translated into reality for me. As a boy, I had read them all; the poems of parting, poems of exile and return as told in "The Irish Emigrant", "Dawn on The Irish Coast" and "There Came To The Beach".

Such sentiments as expressed in the aforesaid poems were not as yet fully understood or appreciated. I must say however I pondered occasionally on what it must have been like to have to

leave one's country and friends. It would never happen to me or my friends I told myself even as I struggled with "The Three R's" within the confines of a rather cold, shabby, claustrophobic classroom of the Dunmore National School in Co. Galway. Such things happened only to other people, in other times. Yes, I too, in time would become another Irish emigrant, though somewhat a reluctant one. It was when it did happen that the full reality of what I had read in the classroom came home to me.

As I leant over the rails of "The Princess Maud" that June day in 1946 I was vividly conscious of all who had gone before me. Not only to England, but to America, and Canada, Australia and other parts of the world. I recall that on the upper Deck of the boat was a group of young men and women. They were singing Irish songs and they all seemed to be high spirits. Like myself, they were, I would say, in their early twenties. Sitting astride a suitcase was a young man playing a fiddle. Close-by was a winsome dark-eyed colleen playing a melodeon. She seemed oblivious to everything going on around her.

Since then, in quieter moments, I have often thought that music and song have been the great healers used by our race in times of sorrow. On more poignant occasions such as the American wakes of old music and song seemed to compensate for, or, make light of the journey into exile.

After we had disembarked from "The Princess Maud", (a name which is indelibly imprinted in many an Irish mind), we were ushered, or to be more precise rushed aboard the Irish Mail Train. The vast majority it would seem were bound for "The Smoke", for either at Crewe or Rugby the numbers alighting from the train were on the small side.

I, and my companion were on our way to the Lincolnshire Fens, where many an Irishman had gone before as migratory labourers on seasonal work. The tea and horse-meat sandwiches which we purchased at Rugby station were repugnant to our palates to say the least. We had to wait a long time for service. Service was the operative word. Service men were certainly served before we were, even though we had requested to be served several times.

Accents, I suppose, are a dead give away, and two non-combatant young Irishmen would have to take second place to men in uniform.

This was the first sign of resentment to being Irish I encountered on arrival in England. Later, I was to see "NO IRISH SERVED HERE" signs displayed in certain public houses in East Anglia. Those who say that they never encountered any anti-Irishness during their years in England are either fortunate or else they have turned a blind eye when faced with the reality of resentment. We of that era didn't let racial animosity enter too much into our lives. After all, We were here to make a living; and make it as best we could. One thing I did learn was that those Irishmen who took part in the war were no better thought of than we who sheltered 'neath the umbrella of neutrality at home in Ireland.

I, and many others owed our safe haven to unselfish men and women who manned "The Bafna Baoil" long before we were born. Yet, the Ireland for which they fought could not sustain the generation that came after them, . . . And That Was Our Grief, . . . Say We.'

(Michael Hannon has written many short stories and articles and now lives in Nottingham).

BOOKS

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

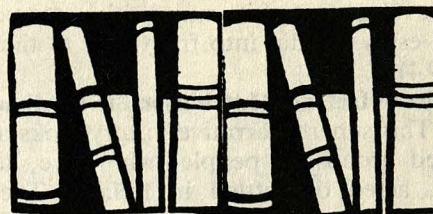
Recently arrived Irish-interest books on the 'Irish Studies in Britain' desk include:

The Munster Plantation: English Migration to Southern Ireland 1583-1641 (Clarendon Press, Oxford. £27.50 hardback) by Michael MacCarthy-Morrogh. This is the first detailed study of the southern mirror image of the Plantation of Ulster – the English settlement of south-west Ireland in late Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Because its modern political effects are obviously not as relevant and immediate as those of the Northern plantation it has tended to be relatively neglected in comparison by historians. The author argues that the Southern plantation was not part of a colonial process but a casual movement from the south-west of England to a relatively peaceful neighbouring region. The book covers all aspects of the Munster plantation: the nature of the land confiscation in the 1580s (which emerges as a haphazard and piecemeal affair), the settlers involved, the numbers of families established, and the way the English modified the province and in turn were changed by local conditions. The author shows how the disruption to the plantation in 1598 proved to be no more than a temporary setback in the growth of the English population, so that by the time of the 1641 rebellion it was powerful enough to control a considerable area. He does

not explain however why, if this was a relatively peaceful and gradualist process, the 1641 rebellion in the south-west was a murderous and bloody as anywhere else in the country. This must remain the subject of another book. (ISBN 0 19 822952 6)

The Deer's Cry: A Treasury of Irish religious verse (Four Courts Press: no price given) edited by Patrick Murray. Features 300 great poems by 130 of the greatest Irish poets, both contemporary and classical, spanning more than a thousand years. Included are Brendan Behan, Christy Brown, Padraic Colum, Seamus Heaney, Douglas Hyde, Frank O'Connor, Sean O'Faolain, Jonathan Swift, Oscar Wilde and W.B. Yeats. The poems range from Amergin's "The Mystery", possibly the first poem composed in Ireland some two thousand years ago, to an excerpt from Seamus Heaney's translation of St John of the Cross. (ISBN 0 906127 81 5)

Irish Life and Traditions (O'Brien Press £6.95 paperback) edited by Sharon Gmelch. Originally published in 1979 as "Irish Life" this book brings together famous Irish people who provide personal accounts of growing up in their part of Ireland; Nell McCafferty in Derry City, Edward McLysaght in rural Clare and George Otto Simms in the Donegal border town of Lifford. Other contributors provide informative and stimulating essays dealing with the



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land, the sea and Irish nature as well as Ireland's prehistory and the development of its major cities. An excellent pot-pourri of essays to dip into from time to time. (ISBN 0 86278 109 4)

The Peoples of Ireland (Hutchinson £15 hardback) by Liam de Paor. This superb narrative history looks at the many and varied groups of people, who have, through the centuries, acted or settled in Ireland. The author is particularly concerned with the interaction of one group with another and argues that only for brief periods can Irish history be treated in any isolation. Ireland's story, de Paor believes, is one of constant interactions between the inhabitants of a troubled island and a wider world. This book, in its flowing narrative, traces the social, cultural, religious and political development of the country from the earliest records of prehistoric settlement to its divided present and in its clarity of explanation is highly recommended. (ISBN 0 09 156140 X)

A short history of Irish Literature (Hutchinson £15 hardback) by Seamus Deane. This is a chronological account of Irish writing with each item seen in the context of its period and its political and cultural environment. Deane argues that the creative tension which makes the Irish literary tradition so rich springs from the language which belonged to both the Irish themselves and their colonial overlords. The book covers everything from the Gaelic background to Seamus Heaney and John Montague and is provided with full chronologies which place Irish literature against the background of Irish culture and other contemporary European writing. (ISBN 0 09 161360 4)

The Rat-Pit (Caliban £4.95 paperback) by Patrick MacGill. The title ostensibly refers to a Glasgow dosshouse but is a symbol for the conditions large numbers of Irish emigrants had to endure on arrival in Scotland. The novel, the latest in MacGill's works to be republished by Caliban, traces the unequal battle of Donegal girl Norah Ryan against poverty in the 'rat-pit' of the turn of the century Glasgow. It is a sequel to MacGill's autobiographical novel **Children of the Dead End** and is itself part-autobiographical based as it is on MacGill's own hand-to-mouth existence as a potato-picker and navvy. MacGill's restrained style and dignified use of English are only set aside when he gives vent to his immense hatred of the gombeen men and the grasping Catholic clergy who parasitically fed off the lifeblood of the characters in his novels of which **The Rat-Pit** is probably the most representative. (ISBN 0 904573 83 4)

Ireland: A Sociological Profile (Institute of Public Administration, Dublin £9.95 paperback) edited by Patrick Clancy, Sheelagh Drudy, Kathleen Lynch and Liam O'Dowd. This is perhaps the fullest introduction to the sociology of modern Ireland, dealing, as it does, with the social structure and institutions in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. Topics covered include demographic change, industrialisation, religion in a divided society, secularisation, social stratification, marriage and family, and rural social change. The book also analyses key issues and processes in Irish society including the social dimensions of sex roles, deviance and crime, and the power and control of media coverage. Chapter headings such as 'Class, Clientilism and the Political Process in the Republic of Ireland' and 'Power, Control and Media Coverage of the Northern Ireland Conflict' indicate how pertinent and up-to-date this compilation is. (ISBN 0 906980 58 5)

Kerry (O'Brien Press £6.95 paperback) by Des Lavelle and Richard Haughton. Lavelle, author of **Skellig, Island Outpost of Europe** teams up with photographer Haughton to produce an entertaining, informative and visually beautiful book which explores the wildlife, visits the islands, records the history and legends, illustrates the

monuments and provides a guide to the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula all illustrated by remarkable full-colour photographs. (ISBN 0 86278 086 1)

Echoes of Moore Street: Dublin Wit, Wisdom, Wickness, Banter and Bitching (O'Brien Press £3.50 paperback) by Paul Ryan. A compendium of wry and witty epithets picked up by the author during his time spent standing on street corners in Dublin, our only complaint is that it is catalogued under 'English wit and humour!' (ISBN 0 86278 103 5)

Traditional Irish Recipes (O'Brien Press £2.95 paperback) by George Thomson. A practical cookery book beautifully presented with each recipe featured in a single page and hand lettered in elegant calligraphy, accompanied by stunning celtic designs. An excellent Christmas present and the recipes aren't bad either covering everything from Boxty and Colcannon to Dublin Bay Prawns. (ISBN 0 86278 110 8)

Wild and Free: Cooking from Nature (O'Brien Press £4.95 paperback) by Cyril and Kit Ó Céirín. A practical handbook of nature cooking using 22 of the more common wild herbs, plants and fruits and describing how these can be used in 100 recipes for jams, syrups, wines, desserts, soups, salads etc. (ISBN 0 86278 111 6)

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